

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-12 are presently pending. Claims 1-8 and 13-18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 9 has been amended so as to be rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base Claim 3 without the introduction of any new matter. Claims 9-12 have been further amended as suggested in the outstanding Action, also without the introduction of any new matter.

The outstanding Action withdrew Claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 11-18 as being drawn to a nonelected species, objected to the specification, objected to Claims 3 and 9-12, and rejected Claim 3 as being unpatentable over Hirsch (U.S. Patent No. 6,808,837).

Applicant acknowledges with gratitude the indication in the outstanding Action that Claims 9-12 include allowable subject matter. As Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of base Claim 3, there being no intermediate claims, and as the other matters objected to in Claims 3 and 9-12 and have been corrected as suggested, it is respectfully submitted that the objections to Claims 9-12 should now be withdrawn and that these claims should be allowed.

The objections to the specification are further submitted to be overcome by the present amendments to the specification that adopt the suggestions in the outstanding Action without the introduction of any new matter. Accordingly, it is believed that these specification objections should also be withdrawn.

The cancellation of Claim 3 is believed to render the rejection thereof as being unpatentable over Hirsch moot.

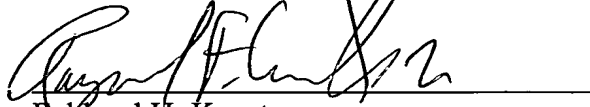
Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that no further issues remain outstanding in the present application, and that this

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application is clearly in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eckhard H. Kuesters', is written over a horizontal line.

Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Raymond F. Cardillo, Jr.
Registration No. 40,440

Customer Number
22850

EHK/RFC/jmp
Tel. no.: (703) 413-3000
Fax no.: (703) 413-2220